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The Graduation Requirement Relative to Proficiency in Written English at the University of Illinois

EDWARD F. POTTHOFF

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In the spring of 1940, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois asked President A. C. Willard to have the proper authorities give serious consideration to the problem of improving students' use of English. The Board made this request because various of its members had found through their contacts with alumni and through criticisms which they received from those who had business and other dealings with former students that too many graduates of the University used poor English in their oral and written expression.

In 1940-41, the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, upon the request of President Willard, made a thorough study of the need for improving students' proficiency in speaking and writing. The Committee ascertained that in the opinion of most of the heads of the instructional departments in the University too many students graduated without having a command of English adequate to their professional needs. A detailed analysis of the quality of the writing produced in final examination papers in various courses by some two thousand upperclassmen in the University revealed that large proportions of them wrote unsatisfactorily. The Committee also found, from almost a score of personnel officers and executives of business concerns which employ large numbers of college graduates, that many such employees fail to reach desired standards in their use of English. The fault most frequently emphasized was the inability to give clear, well-organized, concise expression to thought—to say what needs to be said in such a way that another person will have no difficulty in

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understanding it. Second in importance were faults in grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and sentence structure.

Some of the comments of the businessmen were as follows:

These graduates fail . . . to express thoughts or ideas clearly, concisely, and completely in such a manner that the reports cannot be misinterpreted.

. . . the greatest weakness of the college graduate is his inability to express his thoughts clearly and concisely. . . . he frequently obscures the important information by the inclusion of verbose and extraneous material or reduces the effectiveness by the omission of pertinent details.

Some of the more common faults . . . involve incomplete or ambiguous statement of facts . . . and a lack of unity, or incoherence, in the completed work.

. . . graduates are unable to think effectively and intelligently, . . .

Too often, even with carefully prepared materials, we find that . . . the language used admits of varying interpretations.

. . . most college graduates are deficient in letter writing and public speaking. . . . the deficiency . . . relates to the lack of organization of their thoughts.

. . . the greatest difficulty is in the inability of some (college graduates) to think and express themselves clearly.

. . . it is the exception when we find a graduate who can express himself clearly, either orally or in writing.

. . . the criticism is largely one of spelling and punctuation.

. . . In some cases, the college graduate shows a small vocabulary and a lack of training in grammar.

Faulty sentence structure, wrong spelling, and misuse, or poor selection of words have been noted. . . .

The foregoing studies resulted in the establishment of the Committee on Student English, which continued the work already begun. On the basis of the evidence just presented, this Committee decided that it would be highly desirable for all students receiving undergraduate degrees from the University to be required to have a satisfactory proficiency in the use of written English. An earlier inquiry had revealed that approximately eighty-five percent of the University staff members who responded favored such action. A requirement to this effect, adopted by the University Senate and the Board of Trustees in the spring of 1943, now applies to all students matriculating in the University after September 1, 1944.

Although no requirement has yet been put into effect relative

to students' proficiency in expressing themselves orally, this problem is being studied in order to determine what measures, if any, should be taken. Considerable training in using spoken English in the everyday situations of life is being provided in the required freshman rhetoric courses. The studies now underway, however, may lead to new regulations and practices in the area of oral expression.

Proficiency in the use of written English is not merely a social asset to the individual but it is especially advantageous to him in preparing papers and reports in his classes while continuing his formal education, and it is generally expected of him by employers and others when he enters his chosen vocation. Serious deficiency in expressing himself may definitely handicap him in his life's work. It is to the student's own interest, therefore, to acquire and permanently maintain a reasonably high level of skill in his everyday writing. The graduation requirement relative to proficiency in written English is not simply a credit to the University but it is a distinct advantage to the student himself; it is intended fundamentally for his own benefit and protection.

The basic purpose of the requirement, then, is to have students attain the goal of a satisfactory proficiency in English, the subsidiary regulations described below being intended simply as means for accomplishing this end. These means are the best which the Committee on Student English was able to devise after more than two years of intensive study, including a thorough consideration of practices in a very large number of other colleges and universities.

The Committee found from the study of final examination papers already mentioned that many students who receive a grade of "D" in the second semester of the required freshman rhetoric course (Rhetoric 2) write satisfactorily later; that is, improvement takes place. And on the other hand, numerous students who receive a grade of "C" in the course may later write quite unsatisfactorily; that is, retrogression occurs. In general, the data showed that although grades of "A" or "B" in Rhetoric 2 almost invariably forecast satisfactory writing later, grades of "C" or "D" are not sufficiently reliable indices of what students' subsequent upperclass proficiency in English will be.

The Committee on Student English therefore considered the various procedures which may be used for discovering the upperclassmen whose writing is unsatisfactory: a written examination given for that specific purpose, an analysis of student papers prepared in various courses, and the method of having instructors report to a central office any student whose writing they consider

deficient. In view of the available evidence, the best method by far seemed to be that of a written examination; it is the most equitable and straightforward of all the procedures, and its only serious shortcoming can be avoided by exempting those students whose grades in rhetoric already indicate that they will continue to write satisfactorily while in the University.

The means employed therefore for assuring that all students who receive undergraduate degrees from the University have a satisfactory proficiency in written English is that of requiring those who pass Rhetoric 2 (or Division of General Studies 1b), or the equivalent, with a grade of "C" or "D," to take a qualifying examination, and, if they fail, to take an extra one-semester course in rhetoric (Rhetoric 5). Those who fail Rhetoric 5 must repeat either this course or the examination (whichever one they choose), a passing grade in either case being prerequisite to graduation. Those who receive grades of "A" or "B" in Rhetoric 2 are regarded as having already met the graduation requirement.

The qualifying examination is normally required at the end of the sophomore year, but the student must wait at least one semester before taking this test unless he has a total of eighty or more hours of credit when he passes Rhetoric 2. The interval between the course and the examination is intended to give him time to follow any plan he may choose in preparing for the test and to provide an opportunity for him to improve his skill in writing so as to avoid taking Rhetoric 5. During this period, as at any other time, he may avail himself of the services of the University Writing Clinic (Room 204a Lincoln Hall), which is open on a purely voluntary basis and without fee to any student in the University.

In order to provide for flexibility in arranging students' programs, the individual colleges and schools of the University determine at what point in their careers those who fail the qualifying examination shall take Rhetoric 5. The general policy, however, is to require the course as soon as possible so that failure in it need not result in a postponement of the student's graduation.

Rhetoric 5 is specifically designed to remedy faults in writing and gives three hours credit. In order that the grades assigned in the course may be directly indicative of proficiency in written English and place the emphasis upon its attainment, they are based entirely upon students' performances in the final examination, which is equivalent in every respect to the qualifying examination.

It will be clear from the foregoing that every effort has been made to place the graduation requirement relative to written English upon a basis which is sound, reasonable, and considerate of the student. Only carefully tested means of determining proficiency in writing are used, the facilities needed by those who wish to improve are provided, and much freedom of choice is permitted with respect to the time at which and the manner in which this proficiency is acquired and demonstrated. The sole purpose of the requirement is to have students obtain, for their own benefit, a satisfactory level of skill in everyday writing prior to graduation. The flexibility of the procedures and subsidiary regulations employed is significant therefore because it indicates that they serve merely as means for the attainment of this goal.

The Upperclass Remedial English Course of the University of Illinois

By ROBERT H. MOORE

Department of English, University of Illinois

The University of Illinois, like all other colleges from Harvard to Southern California, has been seriously disturbed in the last few years by the quality of the written English of many of its upperclassmen and graduates. In spite of the requirement of six hours of elementary rhetoric, too many of our students, after having been passed as competent, write a semiliterate gibberish in term papers or discussion examinations in their advanced courses, or in business letters and reports after graduation. And, just as many college instructors blame the high schools for inadequately preparing students in the use of their own language, so the instructors and businessmen who find upperclassmen and graduates poor in English blame the rhetoric instruction at the university.

It is not, of course, wholly the fault of us English teachers, not even when we pass as competent a student who later shows no sign of knowing one end of a sentence from the other. As all English teachers know, most students write "English" only for their English classes, and for the rest of their communication needs use whatever form of pidgin comes natural to them. But no matter how late in the development of their bad language habits they come to us, we as English teachers are supposed to

make them literate, and are scorned if we manage only to reduce their most obvious illiteracies to a minimum.

The University of Illinois, at any rate, has determined to be as certain as possible that no students who are decidedly handicapped by a lack of skill in expressing their ideas shall be graduated from the university. To this end a number of procedures have been inaugurated.

For many years, all freshmen entering the university have had to take a proficiency examination, part objective test and part expository theme.¹ Since September, 1943, students who fail that examination have been denied admission to Rhetoric 1, the first of the university's two required semesters of rhetoric, and after three such failures are dropped from the university. A non-credit remedial course, Rhetoric 0, is offered to those who wish to take it, but passing that course or the proficiency examination remains the prerequisite for entrance to Rhetoric 1.

A second procedure, now abandoned, has been to require students who have made grades of D in Rhetoric 2 to take a third semester remedial course. Beginning September 1, 1944, this requirement has been modified. All students matriculating after that date who make grades of C or D in Rhetoric 2 must take a proficiency examination at the end of the sophomore year, and those who fail that examination will be required to take Rhetoric 5, and at the end of that course must pass the upperclass proficiency examination before they can graduate.

Since this change in requirements will of necessity affect the age and motivation of the personnel of Rhetoric 5 classes and will probably lead to considerable modification of the methods of that course, it might be of interest to English teachers in general to consider at this time the methods that have been employed in the course in the past, and the relative success it has had as a remedial course that might be as useful to high-school sophomores as it has been to sophomores in college. The basic troubles of the semiliterate student seem pretty much the same at both stages—except that in college they are by four years more firmly rooted in the student's own despair.

While there have been many variations, in general the students enrolling in Rhetoric 5 classes have exhibited two kinds of weaknesses, with most of the students needing instruction and practice in overcoming both.

Most of the students have been inadequately prepared in the observance of the elementary conventions of English grammar

¹ "Rhetoric Proficiency Tests at the University of Illinois," *Illinois English Bulletin*, March, 1944.

and mechanics—in the agreement of subjects and verbs, in the reference and agreement of pronouns, in spelling, in punctuation, and in sentence construction.

These inadequacies, I believe, are not to be blamed on the teaching in the University's Rhetoric 1 and 2 courses. They result rather from much earlier confusion, confusion begun in grade school and left uncorrected in high school. Students who failed, in their earliest school work, to understand grammatical terminology or grammatical principles, or who failed to see the functional applications of school English to their own speech and writing, need a more thorough review and a more simplified approach than Rhetoric 1 and 2 classes can afford. That review and that approach, then, have been important parts of the class-work in Rhetoric 5. Much of our time, especially in the early weeks of the course, has been devoted to a simple, repetitive review of the basic principles of grammar and mechanics, beginning with the parts of speech. (How many students, sophomores in college, seem never to have heard of them! No wonder they cannot punctuate, or control their sentences.) Our emphasis, of course, is always on the functional application of these elementary principles to writing problems, and our aim the elimination of the most common and most glaring errors in these fundamentals of decent writing.

The second chief weakness Rhetoric 5 students exhibit is an inability to develop generalized statements with enough concrete and specific detail to ensure clarity. Too many of them feel that any generalization which is clear to them must automatically be equally clear and convey the same idea to every reader. A related problem is that of disunity and incoherence resulting from the lack of any central idea at all, of merely offering random remarks about an indistinctly conceived topic, without ever pinning down what they want to say about that topic in topic sentence or thesis. The rest of the class time in Rhetoric 5, then, has been devoted to learning to express unified, coherent, developed—but not verbose, and never embroidered—ideas. We have spent nearly two-thirds of a semester's theme-writing on single paragraphs, each with a clearly expressed topic sentence clarified by specific, concrete details. Perhaps twenty themes a semester have been devoted to the mastering of a few major paragraph types. The rest of our themes have attempted to extend to the longer composition the principles learned in this intensive study of the paragraph.

As a specialized variant of the problem of paragraph and composition organization, we have written, in the course of the

semester, three or four practice examinations illustrating varieties of discussion questions and suggesting the necessity of organized, specific, adequately developed answers. A great many students, through high school and elementary college courses, have little or no experience with the essay-type examination, and write poor examination papers in their later college courses through sheer ignorance of what is expected of them.

In addition, throughout the semester, we have attempted to develop reading comprehension and make some addition to vocabularies that are usually woefully inadequate. For these purposes we have used the College Edition of the *Reader's Digest*, with emphasis on analyzing the organization of the simple, contemporary prose there presented.

These three elements—simplified review of functional grammar and mechanics; intensive practice in writing unified, coherent, and developed compositions and discussion-question examinations; and development of reading comprehension—make up the course in Rhetoric 5 as it has been taught in past semesters. A reasonable accuracy (enough skill to avoid elementary errors in grammar and mechanics) and an effective clarity have been considered essential to a passing grade in the course.

If there is anything new in the methods outlined, it is the conscious return to a words-of-one-syllable, grade-school simplicity in the presentation of grammatical terminology and principles, and the studied avoidance of complex writing problems. It might be supposed that college sophomores would resent such treatment; as a matter of fact, they appreciate it, knowing as they do that they have been having trouble with English ever since they first met it formally and found themselves tongue-tied at the introduction.

Because of the draft and easy-money war jobs, many of the students who have successfully passed Rhetoric 5 are no longer enrolled in the university, so that any evaluation of the effectiveness of Rhetoric 5 must of necessity be based on comparatively few cases. During the winter of 1943-44, a check was made on the students still at the university. A questionnaire was submitted to the instructors of those students in courses requiring term papers or discussion question examinations. The results, in so far as they may be trusted, were highly gratifying. Most of the students whose work was checked were reported as average in their writing; a few were considered above average; two were considered poor by one instructor replying to the questionnaire, but were considered average by another instructor. But not one

of the group that had been noticeably weak in their writing at the end of their freshman rhetoric courses was still unequivocally considered below average after having passed Rhetoric 5. And the writing on which those opinions were based was writing the students did not expect to have judged for the quality of its English.

It seems at least possible that such a remedial course earlier in their academic careers might have saved them much of the trouble their weakness in English occasions, and the earlier, perhaps, the better.

A Report on the University of Illinois Experimental Writing Clinic

By W. G. JOHNSON

Department of English, University of Illinois

INTRODUCTION

In the December, 1943, report of the University Senate Committee on Student English the committee included among its recommendations:

The Committee believes . . . that a writing clinic should be established in the University to guide students towards intelligent self-direction in overcoming their own difficulties. The clinic would not supervise writing or provide tutoring, but it would diagnose weaknesses and suggest corrective procedures.

On October 16, 1944, Professor H. N. Hillebrand, Head of the Department of English, sent a copy of the following letter to each member of the University faculty:

As you perhaps know, the Committee on Student English has recommended the establishment of a writing clinic for the benefit of students whose written English is unsatisfactory. The English Department, in cooperation with the Personnel Bureau, has set up such a clinic on an experimental basis.

The Writing Clinic is designed to analyze the writing difficulties which the student encounters, to provide the advice necessary for him to remedy them under his own "power," and to determine the effectiveness of his remedial efforts. The general purpose is to help the student up to the point where he can exercise intelligent self-direction in overcoming his own difficulties; the clinic does not supervise writing or provide tutoring.

Whenever you are not satisfied with the quality of English written by any student, I hope that you will recommend to him that he make use of the services of the Writing Clinic. The student should

go to the English Department, 204a Lincoln Hall, or to the Personnel Bureau, 311 Administration Building East, in order to make an appointment to consult one of the counsellors.

THE LOAD

During the first semester, 34 students came to the clinic. Dean Jordan of the College of Engineering sent over 15 foreigners—8 Turkish army officers and 7 Latin-Americans—and a Chinese-American who had received his education partly in China and partly in Chicago. A Japanese-American evacuee was sent by his rhetoric instructor. A Haitian, a senior in the College of Education, came voluntarily. Members of the English Department referred the remaining 16. Papers written by all of these students except the Turks and 6 of the Latin-Americans were analyzed.

Sixty-two hours were devoted to counselling these students and making arrangements for helping them.

THE PROBLEMS

(1) The foreigners and the Oriental-Americans present problems different from those of the rest of the American-born. The Turks and the Latin-Americans had a smattering of knowledge of the English language; most of them were so inadequately prepared in English that they could not order a meal in a restaurant. They could not understand their instructors either in the classrooms or in their offices.

The foreigners obviously needed special instruction in English. Arrangements were made with Captain Tigrak (in charge of the Turkish army officers on campus), Dean Jordan, and Mr. G. C. Camp of the rhetoric staff to open a seven-hour-a-week course for the Turks. See Mr. Camp's comments on pages 13-15.

Most of the Latin-Americans were here on government scholarships. All of them agree that their governments, unlike the Turkish government, would be unwilling to finance special instruction in English. Few of them were financially able to be tutored. Those who could not afford tutors were advised to remain in Rhetoric 0 until their instructors were satisfied that they knew enough English to understand their instructors and their textbooks. They were also advised—as were the Turks and the Oriental-Americans—to make use of such obvious aids as conversation with American students, movies, and various facilities of the Union, the University social center. Three of the Latin-Americans were tutored by either Dr. E. G. Mathews or Miss Mary Hussey.

Personnel Bureau test results indicated that the two Oriental-Americans were not so able as either the Turks or the Latin-Americans. The Japanese-American had an astonishing lack of fluency in

speaking and in writing in spite of the fact that he had graduated from an American high school. By some mischance, he was placed in Rhetoric 1 instead of Rhetoric 0. Tutoring was recommended for both of these students.

The Haitian, a mature individual who is an inspector of elementary schools at home, was assigned handbook exercises and the writing of several expositions. A highly intelligent man, he was able to pass the qualifying examination in January. His major difficulty was lack of practice in writing English. He is taking a rhetoric course during the second semester.

(2) The large majority of the American-born were handicapped by poor training in high school and, to some extent, in college. Without exception, they did not have a useful control of the simple facts of grammar in spite of having had three or four years of English in high school and from one to four semesters of composition in college. They did not know how to write effective sentences. They did not know how to paragraph. They did not have good vocabularies.

Most of these students were assigned handbook exercises. Only three could afford tutors. I doubt if most of the others benefited particularly from perusing handbooks. They were, like so many of our other students, unable to accomplish anything without supervision. Most of them were unable to read efficiently; these were referred to Dr. Larsen of the Personnel Bureau for help in improving their reading. Three of them were willing to take advantage of the opportunity.

(3) Several were primarily deficient in spelling but were otherwise able to do fairly well in writing.

The purchase and use of Triggs and Robbins' *Improve Your Spelling* were recommended to the poor spellers.

(4) A few were apparently unable to do university work.

I do not believe that anything can be done towards the improvement of the writing of students who are not able to do university work.

SUGGESTIONS

(a) Since the Writing Clinic is not a tutoring agency, I believe that certain changes need to be made in our remedial program. If the counsellors in the clinic are not only to analyze the student's difficulties but also to suggest remedies, the Senate Committee on Student English and the Department of English will need to provide the students with means for overcoming their difficulties. If the Writing Clinic is to have any value, it must have remedial agencies to which it can send the students with problems. It seems to me that the Writing Clinic Counsellor, after

analyzing the student's difficulties, should be able to send him to one or more of these groups:

1. *A non-credit course in the elements of English.* For the time being, one or more Rhetoric 0 sections could be conducted for foreigners, but, as soon as funds can be made available for the purpose, a five-hour year course for foreigners should be introduced. The Writing Clinic should have no part in the planning and conducting of such a course. The course should, I believe, be under the control of the Director of the Rhetoric Division. It might, however, be useful occasionally for clinic counsellors to have a student (for example, the Chinese-American mentioned earlier) transferred from a regular Rhetoric 0 section to a class conducted for foreigners.

2. Rhetoric 0 might well be opened to non-freshmen who have not mastered the elements of grammar, the elements of good diction, and the writing of simple exposition. The Rhetoric 0 program might need some reorganization to meet the needs of more mature students.

3. Rhetoric 5 might well be opened to non-freshmen whose major difficulty is lack of continued practice in writing exposition.

4. Because most of our poor student writing is done in essay examinations, I suggest that one of the Writing Clinic staff members devote part of his time to giving non-credit short courses in the techniques of writing effective examinations.

5. Because we have a great many poor spellers among our students, I suggest that one of the Clinic staff members devote part of his time to giving short non-credit courses in spelling. Material for such short courses is available.

6. Eventually, a credit course in preparing the research paper might well be added to the list of rhetoric courses. Much of the inadequate writing in courses is done in term papers and reports. A course in the methods of preparing a research paper would, I believe, help improve many a term paper and report.

7. Because many of our students cannot afford to have tutors and because students do not always pay their tutors, tutoring by individual rhetoric instructors should be held to a minimum. The members of the Writing Clinic staff should not do any tutoring at all.

(b) The release of three members of the rhetoric staff from one-third of their teaching loads would provide sufficient time for the purposes of the Writing Clinic next year. The plan would be to keep the Clinic office open from three to five from Monday through Friday. Students could then come to the Clinic to have their writing difficulties analyzed and to be assigned to one of the remedial agencies suggested in the preceding section.

In addition to the counselling, the staff members would give group instruction in spelling, the writing of examinations and, if there were a demand and if time permitted, the preparation of term papers and reports.

Many of our students are unable to remedy difficulties "under their own power." With the exception of some of the foreigners, none of the students who came to the Clinic had been trained to exercise intelligent self-direction. If the University does not want to deny such students degrees because of poor English, it should supply them with means for removing their difficulties. Among such means are individual counselling; short courses in the writing of examinations and spelling; the opening of Rhetoric 0 to non-freshmen who have not mastered such matters as the elements of grammar; the opening of Rhetoric 5 to non-freshmen whose greatest need is practice in writing; and, for the foreigners, a year course in the elements of English.

Tutoring Turkish Students in English at the University of Illinois

By G. C. CAMP

Department of English, University of Illinois

By arrangement between the University and the Turkish government on the one hand and between the University and me on the other, I undertook to tutor seven Turkish students newly arrived in the United States and enrolled in the College of Engineering, the Turkish government to reimburse the University for the cost of the tutoring at the present rate established for overtime teaching. The tutoring began on November 13, 1944, and continued for the equivalent of seven hours a week for twelve weeks.

Two of the seven students discontinued the work after about three weeks. Special circumstances made it possible for them to make themselves understood after tutoring in the most useful everyday vocabulary. Their greatest need was for technical glossaries. These I enabled them to obtain, and they devoted their attention wholly to advanced courses in mathematics. The remaining five besought me to give them aid in the translation of their General Engineering Drawing text, but I thought it inadvisable to sacrifice work of more general usefulness to this specific need. They struggled with the translation alone, and I devoted my efforts to the elements of the language. But the demands of this translation precluded their giving any but a little study to the elements of the language, other than that possible within the allotted seven hours.

The instruction was largely informal. The entire group had to learn the names of articles they needed to buy. I conducted them on a tour of a number of stores. An effective means of acquiring vocabulary was description and discussion of maps, diagrams, and photographs of foods, homes, cities, and other places and objects in Turkey. Together we haltingly retraced their travel to and in the United States, acquiring vocabulary and idiom.

In the fourth week I administered the "Gates Reading Survey" test for "Grades 3 (2nd half) to 10" (Form I, Revised 1942).¹ The results ranged for speed (the less significant score) from grades 2.8 to 4, and for "Level of comprehension" (the more significant score) from 3.7 to 4.6. I introduced at once the Dolch "Basic Sight Word Test" for the most commonly used words, and began supplying lists of the most useful prepositional and adverbial idioms. *My Weekly Reader*, published by the Educational Press, Columbus, Ohio, for grades 4, 5 and 6 provided reading adapted to their level of vocabulary and sentence structure. *Graded Exercises in English for the Foreign Born* by Robert J. Dixson of the Department of English for Foreigners, College of the City of New York (Regents Publishing Co., New York, 1943) proved extremely useful from about the sixth week, in spite of the objection that it is designed for non-academic students in the New York area. Near the end of the twelve weeks I secured certain pamphlets written to introduce junior high school students to the physical sciences (published by the Row, Peterson Co., Evanston, Ill.).

I provided some drill in phonics, but most of the instruction in pronunciation I thought it advisable to offer incidentally. I corrected some written papers, but thought it unwise to require many. I gave a little instruction in reading the news.

But throughout the twelve weeks the instruction was informal. The members of the group asked questions about any subject upon which they needed help or in which they were interested. Many subjects of interest were discussed.

At the end of the course I gave no test comparable with that given in the fourth week. That test was justifiable because necessary for diagnosis. But I did not feel that I would be justified in demanding two hours of the students' time for a final test. Results can none the less be stated. The students were able to read the junior high school texts mentioned above with facility and

¹ Professor G. M. Blair supplied these, and was generously helpful in other ways.

comprehension. One student was able to describe and analyze an experiment extemporaneously. The others followed his account intelligently. One was able to explain certain types of Russian weapons used by the Turkish army. Another gave me an account of the effects of an earthquake in a village where he had been stationed. And so on. None is a fluent speaker. But all can devise verbal means of obtaining from a listener the word they require.

I am making arrangements with the Speech Clinic to begin systematic instruction in oral English. Nevertheless, I think it regrettable that provision has not been made to continue the work as it is described above. The group is now at a point where it could profit most from continued instruction. And although the individuals have shown great ability to learn independently, and although the Speech Clinic will meet certain of their needs, some loss will be incurred with the complete cessation or the interruption of the work.

These students, and doubtless others, expect to secure degrees from the University. Satisfactory work in Rhetoric may be required. At least it is the expressed desire of the students I have tutored, and I judge that they can achieve it. But preparation for Rhetoric, or indeed instruction in the language for cultivated and influential foreign students should scarcely be left to their unguided efforts, or to chance. Classes adapted to their requirements are needed, and the classes should be small—a maximum of ten students should be set. The question of whether the University might not grant credit in English as a "foreign language" might well be considered.

The materials for teaching such a course, are, however, deplorably few. Some useful materials are available, but these need to be supplemented. And there is an especial need for skillfully edited, graded texts for reading, similar to those provided for American students of foreign languages. None exists for foreign students in America. Much could be done, incidentally, to afford a better understanding of America. The group I tutored were at times irked with the necessity of reading what was obviously designed for children, although they came to see the value of it and accept it intelligently and in good humor.

Finally, I should like to record a question that has occurred to me, namely, whether in requiring that the University be reimbursed for the instruction provided the students, it is not offering a rebuff to a foreign government that is difficult to explain and justify.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

at the University of Illinois, Urbana

Saturday, November 3, 1945

9:30 A.M.—Business meeting in 111 Gregory Hall.

10:30 A.M.—General meeting in 112 Gregory Hall. Address by Professor ARTHUR CHRISTY, University of Illinois: "American Literature in Post-War Education."

12:30 P.M.—Luncheon meeting in Lincoln Room of the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel, Green and Broadway, Urbana.

Miss HETTIE PICK, Granite City High School: "An Experiment in Civilizing."

Miss MARY CARLSON, West Rockford High School: "Developmental Reading."

And others.

It is to be hoped that all friends of better English teaching will extend the notice of this meeting, which is open to all who are interested. All luncheon reservations (\$1.25 a plate) should be in by November 1. Address requests for reservations to Gertrud Biedermann, 506 S. Mathews, Urbana, Illinois.